

S I G N E S
OF THE
T I M E S:
OR
P R O G N O S T I C K S
O F
Future Judgements,
WITH
The way how to prevent them.

E T
Edward Bagshaw, Student of Ch. Church.



L O N D O N;
Printed for *Simon Miller* at the Star in *St. Pauls*
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ST. GIN. 2

OF THE
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FOR
BOOKS

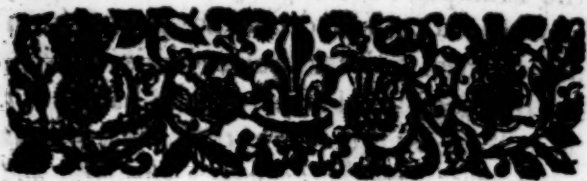
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The Preface.



Among the names whereby the publick Ministers of the word are expressed in Scripture, there is none either more usefull unto others, or if neglected, more dreadfull to themselves, than the stile of Watchmen, which is so often given them, whose businesse it is to foresee the first Approach of Danger, and to give timely Notice, that so all who through sleep and ease would not rouse up themselves, and take the Alarm, might be inexcusably guilty of their own Destruction. But, saith God to Ezekiel, whom he had deputed for the discharge of that forlorne employment, if the Watchman see the Sword come, (which may be understood proportionably of any other impending Calamity) and blow not the

Ezek. 33. 6.

The Preface.

Hab 2. 1.

Verse 2.

the Trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. *It was, I believe, for fear of this terrible account (which the common sort of meerly self-called, and humanely appointed Prophets consider not) that Habakkuk, who was by God himself commissioned for this Taske, to declare his diligence, cries out, I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say to me; And to shew, that what he received in this kind, was not to be concealed or reserved only for his own use, God presently bids him, Write the vision and make it plain upon Tables, that he who runs may read it, i. e. Whatever you find upon your most strict and severe enquiry, let it not be imprisoned in secret, but unfolded to all in the most perspicuous and apparent manner; since such visions like light, are lost as to the use of them, if they be not communicated.*

If this was the duty of Prophets heretofore, it must needs follow, that it doth equally belong to Preachers now; whose burden is not as all lessend, but as their Ministry is more glorious, so there is a double weight of care incumbent upon them; For they,

The Preface.

they, saith the Apostle speaking of Gospel-Ministers, do watch for mens souls, as those who must give an account. And when the Apostle Paul would testifie how carefully he had discharged his Ministry, he tells the Ephesian Elders, Heb. 13. 17. Acts 20. 26. that he was clear from their blood: Thereby implying, that had he not with so much sollicitous industry and watchfullnesse performed his office, in denouncing their danger as well as in declaring their duty, he should have been accountable for their miscarriage.

This Consideration alone, without any circumstantiall inducements, will sufficiently justifie me in venturing to Publish, what I have now, not without great anxiety, for a long time observed; That so, if these indeed are Signes of the Times, or, Fore-runners of Future Judgments, which I have impartially Collected for such out of the Scriptures of Truth; then others, together with my self, might take notice of, and be warned by them. For though I shall alwayes pray, that I may prove herein a false Prophet; yet so long as our National finnes are so great and crying, I should not have been faithfull in my Ministry, (which I doe not take to be confined within the circuit of
one

The Preface.

one Parish) should I not have thus Blown the
Trumpet, and endeavoured to awaken all, in-
to whose hands this Treatise may come, that,
while the Cloud is gathering, they might look
up, and labour to avoid their danger.

Mary Humming Childs Lader

Drury-lane,
Feb. 28. 1661.

Sean Bullocks Childs Lader

Edward Bagshaw.

Signer



Signes of the Times.

Matth. 16. 3.

*Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the face
of the Sky, and can ye not discern the
signes of the Times?*



Hese words contain our Saviours
answer, to an impious command
of the unbelieving *Pharisees*, who,
notwithstanding the many Mira-
cles he had wrought, yet now
come to require a *visible sign* from
him; a *sign from Heaven*; and
this they did, not out of any desire to be convinced
by him, but willing some way or other to entrap and
ensnare him; The Text saith, *misgosses adur, play-*
ing the tempters with him; For, that we may know
by what *spirit* they were acted, we shall find that the
very *first temptation*, whereby the Devil did set up-
on our Saviour, was to desire such a sign of his Di-
vinity from him, *If thou be the Son of God, command*
that

that these stones be made bread, so these, show us a sign from Heaven.

Our Saviours absolute refusal, both then and here, to satisfy this bold and unwarrantable curiosity, leaves us this Observation, That where ordinary means for the attaining of faith may be had, there it is nothing else but a tempting of God to request a Miracle. Miracles are the rarities and reserves of Heaven, which God will not suffer to be squandred away to no purpose; but Gods visible store-house and treasure of good things must be first searched and ransacked, before that other way may be, so much as in a wish, attempted. Had the *Pharisees* done that part of their duty, which was to search the Scriptures, and to enquire thence, what kind of person the *Messiah* was to be, and what he was to do and suffer, they might thence have arrived to a better satisfaction of their doubts, than any miracle could have procured them.

Our Saviour therefore remits them to these ordinary and safe, because sanctified, wayes of trial: and by a familiar instance, convinces them of their great folly and indiligence, in this so serious and important businesse. You are, saith he, very carefull to observe the Heaven, and from the various aspects of it, are able to collect what kind of Weather the following day will produce; which industry of yours in that which is of so small concernment, argues you to be but *Hypocrites*, in that you neglect to take notice of the *times*, the *signes* of which are as visible and as easie to be known, as the prognosticks and indications of the Weather.

By *times* here, I take it our Saviour means, those calamities

calamities and miseries, which were then hanging over, and, because of their rejecting of *Christ*, would certainly come upon the Jews. So is the word *times* here rendered *times*, to be understood in other places; as where the Apostle *Paul* saith, *But of the times and seasons, ye have no need that I write unto you, for that your selves know, that the day of the Lord (i. the destruction he hath threatned) so cometh as a thief in the night;* For when they shall say, *peace and safety* (i. i. there is nothing at all to be feared) then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travaile upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. So when our Saviour wept over *Jerusalem*, in contemplation of those miserable slaughters and devastations which were then coming upon them, he used these words, *Oh! that thou hast known in this thy day, (i. in which I warn thee of thy approaching danger) the things that belong to thy peace:* But because they regarded them not, but went on secure and carlesse, therefore he acquaints them, that *their enemies*, the *Romans*, should very shortly demolish their City, because, saith he, *thou knowest not, when the time or season of thy visitation,* i. that time, wherein mercy is offered, the refusal of which will inevitably bring a sudden and irreparable judgment. And this place I take to be a full Comment upon the *times* or *times*, here mentioned by our Saviour.

1 Thes. 5. 1, 3.

Luke 19. 41, 44.

The words thus explained observe two Observations.

Doct. 1. *God never intends to bring a publick and eminent judgment upon a people that professe his name, but he alwayes creates and sends some signes which do infallibly foretell and forewarn it.*

Doct. 1.

Doct. 2. That it is every holy and truly religious mans duty, to study and to examine those signs.

Reas. 1.

The first Observation is, That God never intends to bring a publick and eminent judgement upon a people that professe his name, but he alwayes creates and sends some signes, which do infallibly foretell and forerun it. And the truth of this is evident, not only from matter of fact and story, (for we read not in the whole Scripture, of any judgement that God ever sent upon the *Israelites*, (who had the sole priviledge of being his people) but he alwayes sent some previous warnings and admonitions of it, which were his *signs*) but likewise it appears from these two Reasons.

1. From that sympathy and fellow-feeling which God hath put in his whole Creation, whereby each part hath a care of the whole, and according to its measure, doth endeavour its preservation. As in the body natural of man, upon the next and immediate approaches of death, some parts are put into sudden tremblings and convulsions; whereby they discover the nearnesse, and as far as they can, labour to prevent the danger of that enemy: so hath God ordered it in the great body of the world; that Earth-quakes, like Convulsions; Eclipses, like failing of the eyes, and such other unusual prodiges (which have an Analogy and resemblance to the accidents that happen to the body of man, should commonly precede that time, wherein any one State or Nation is fitt to be involved. As when our Saviour died, the Sun was darkned, the Rocks were rent, the Earth shook by a kind of natural sympathy and compassionate horror at so dreadfull and amazing a spectacle; so when *Jerusalem*

Jerusalem was to be destroyed; our Saviour himself foretels, that there should be *Earthquakes*, and *Famines*, Luke 21. 11.
 and *Pestilences*, and *fearfull sights*, and *great signes*, as the van-carriers and outguard to that more terrible desolation which was to follow them. What the Apostle therefore sayes elegantly concerning future Glory, that the *whole Creation*, which was made subject to vanity and misery for mans sinne, *doth groane*, and as it were *travaile in pain*, *untill it be delivered from the bondage of corruption*; and manumitted or set free to partake of the *glorious liberty of the Children of God*: so while it is in this state of vanity, God hath put into it such a quick sense, that not one part can grieve, but it will all, after a sort, grieve together; and discover by its *tremblings*, *shakings*, *eclipses* and *extraordinary changes*, that there is some great judgment a coming. Rom. 8. 19, 22.

Secondly, The second Reason may be taken from the gracious and mercifull disposition of God, who is unwilling at once to *stir up all his anger*, and therefore warns often before he strikes. Reas. 2. When once God is in Covenant with a people, it is not a little matter that will provoke him to use extremities against them: according as the Psalmist observes concerning the people of Israel, whose hearts, though they were not right with him, nor stedfast in his Covenant, yet, saith he, God being full of compassion, *forgave their iniquity*, and *destroyed them not*; yea, *many a time turned he his anger away*, and *did not stir up all his wrath*; For he remembered that they were but flesh, *a wind that passeth away*, and *cometh not again*. What forbearance here is imputed unto Gods considering his peoples frailty; in another place is ascribed unto Psalm. 78. 37.

Gods being mindfull of his Covenant. As we have
 Psal. 106. 43. it, Many times ^{45.} would he deliver them, but they provoked
 him by their Council, and were brought low for their
 iniquity; nevertheless he regarded their affliction when
 he heard their cry, and he remembered for them his Co-
 venant; and repented according to the multitude of his
 mercies. It is by virtue of this Covenant, into which
 every Nation professing his Name do enter, that God
 is so unwilling to smite, and will never surprize his
 people; and therefore he lets his anger smoke long,
 before the fire of it breaks out. In the Covenant
 God made with David, are expressed the termes
 wherein all Gods Covenants do run, either to the
 Jews or any other people who stand under that rela-
 tion; He shall, saith God, cry unto me, thou art my
 Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. And
 then God promises, My mercy will I keep for him for
 evermore, and my Covenant shall stand fast with him.
 Whereupon he saies, that if his Children should re-
 bell against him, Then I will visit their transgression
 with a Rod, and their iniquity with stripes, i. I will
 gently correct them; for which he gives this reason,
 My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing which
 is gone out of my lips. God therefore having obliged
 himself to deale as a Father, he will not come to cast
 a people utterly off, and to rescind all engagements
 and ties between them, till all his other remedies
 have failed. As a Father will often scowle upon
 his son, then chide, then warne and admonish him,
 before he proceeds to cut off the Entaile, and utter-
 ly to disinherit him. So deals God with a professing
 people, he shewes some apparent signes of his anger,
 before he goes on to pout out, and to execute the
 fiercenesse

Psal 88 26, 34.

Verse 31.

fiere and terrible of it: He makes the characters and tokens of his indignation legible, and unless they *blind their eyes, and burden their hearts*, he will not let it fall with its whole weight and surcharge upon them. And so much for the first Observation.

The second Observation is this, That It is every *Dott. 2.*
holy and true religious mans duty, to study and to examine those signes. And this is clear in that our Saviour calls the *Pharisees, Hypocrites*, for neglecting it; and by his Prophet *Jeremy*, God complains, *The flock* Jer. 8. 7.
in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming, (i. e. these brute creatures understand their proper seasons, and what in each of them is most for their good,) but my people know not the judgement of the Lord, (i. e. they heed not that judgement, which by all marks and tokens, they might easily perceive God is bringing upon them)
 The Church therefore, when she would declare and manifest her integrity, she saies, *Fear, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord: have we waited for thee,* Isa. 26. 8.
i. e. We have traced the footsteps of thy judgments, we have discovered the print and appearance of them, and accordingly we have composed our selves to wait upon thee. And that this is every holy mans duty, will appear from these Reasons,

First, Because this is the end why God doth send *Reas. 1.*
 these forerunners, that they may be taken notice of: as when God made the *Rain-bow* to be a token of the Covenant between himself and *Noah*, he saies, *My* Gen. 9. 14.
bow shall be seen in the cloud, i. e. it shall not be placed idely there, but as it were, summon the eye of every beholder to observe it: so when God sets some lightnings

lightnings and overtures of a tempest to precede his thunder, he loseth his design, if such as professe to fear his name do not regard them. Therefore the Psalmist threatneth the wicked, *Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.* Intimating, that to be incurious and indiligent heeders of any of Gods works, especially of his works of mercy, would onely adde wings and weight unto his judgements, to make them more speedy and withall more intolerable.

Reas. 2. Secondly, This will make the godly more than ordinarily carefull and observant of their wayes. As, when no enemy is near, the Souldier is apt to relax his Discipline; but when he perceives either the rising of the Dust, or the neighing of Horses, presently he buckles on his armes, and prepares himself for the Combate. So is the case between God and us, while we conceive that he is at peace with us, and all is well, we are apt to *slumber and sleep*, (as even the wise Virgins in the Parable did, and herein kept company with the foolish.) But when we perceive that God is angry, and by some evident symptomes of his wrath, we can read, that he is preparing his thunderbolts, and aiming them at the wicked, this will awaken us to look to our standing, and to provide some shelter against the impending storme: When the judgments are actually come, then the Prophet tells us, *that even the wicked will learne righteousness.* How much more should the godly do it, while these judgements are coming? for then is their time, to run into their hiding-place. According to the advice of the same Prophet, *Come my people, enter thou*
into

into thy Chambers, and shut thy doores about thee: Hide thy self as it were for a little moment, untill the indignation be overpast. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. Wherein there is declared, not onely that the people of God may discern the first approaches of wrath, but likewise that then they ought to act and quicken their faith on Christ, who is their rock and refuge.

Lastly, This will give God the glory of his justice, and likewise satisfie and quiet the spirit of his people, when at last God doth proceed to accomplish the severity of his judgement. If a Father should suddenly disinherit his Son, without ever discovering any signes of his displeasure; the son would have reason to be discontented, and to complaine of harsh and rigorous usage; But when the Parent can say to his sonne as the forme is prescribed in *Deuteronomy*, *Thou art a glutton and a drunkard, and likewise stubborn and rebellious, and wilt not obey my voice; and when I have chastened thee, thou wouldst not hearken to me.* Then if he proceeds to take a legal remedy, none can blame him for it. So when the godly, by observing the *signes of the times*, shall say, God is now angry, and unlesse you repent, will assuredly bring a sudden judgement upon you; if at last the overflowing scourge doth come, they must needs applaud Gods justice, and be comforted concerning his doings; as the expression is, *Ye shall be comforted, concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem: And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause, all that I have done in it.*

Reas. 3.

Deut. 21. 18,
20.Ezek. 14. 22,
23.

One of which causes is, their not attending to those preparatory strokes and *items* of future vengeance, whereby God shewed himself willing to be prevented, and therefore was most just in punishing.

Use.

The Use of it shall be to exhort all us of this Nation, to enquire whether any of these *signes* be upon us; and that we may do so, the best way will be to examine first what are those *signes*, which fatally and inevitably forerun some great and signal calamity.

To find out this, our onely way is, not to depend upon our own guesles, or to follow the *spirit* and conceits of other men; but to *search the Scriptures*, especially the *Prophecies of the Old Testament*; For we must not think, that those Predictions were only made against the *Jews*, but they equally concerne any Nation, which succeeds into their priviledge and relation; so that we may call them *The Rolls of Heaven, or, The Books of Divine Providence*; wherein we may read and assuredly learn, how near the ruine and extirpation is of each professing State and Kingdome. The *Signes* which are there Registred, are such as these,

Signe 1.

Gen. 8. 22.

First, When there are great and suddain mutations in that course and order which God hath appointed in nature. God hath already fixed a Law, that, *While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and Summer and Winter shall not cease, &c.* These seasons shall not vary, but follow each other in their proper turnes. Not as if God had indispenably tied himself alwayes to observe this Rule, but that he would ordinarily do this without alteration, unlesse the finnes of a people did provoke him,

for

for then, as he speaks to the *Israelites*, *They should know his breach of promise, i.e.* that he would change and vary his determination. When therefore the seasons are altered, when we have our *Summer* in *Winter*, and our *Winter* in *Summer*, it is a sign God is angry; and is now *whetting his sword*, and *preparing his arrows* against the transgressors. Therefore when *Moses* threatens the *Israelites* for their disobedience, amongst other judgements, he reckons this for one, *Thy Heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and thy earth iron, and thy rain powder and dust*, and then concludes, and they shall be unto thee for a sign and for a wonder. Accordingly when *Samuel* would declare how angry God was with the People, for their wantonness in desiring a change of their Government, he tells them that he would call for *thunder and rain*, which at that time of the year in those parts, was altogether strange; *That*, saith he, *ye may perceive and see, that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a King.* And when upon this the Lord sent *thunder and rain*, the people were so apprehensive of their danger, that immediately they cry out to *Samuel*, *Pray for thy servants, unto the Lord thy God, that we dye not*: as conceiving, that God would not stop or rest satisfied with a bare denunciation of his anger, but go on to the extremity of it. So the Prophet *Joel* makes an *unseasonable seeds-time*, and an *unfruitfull harvest* forerunners of some greater vengeance. *Alas*, saith he, *for the day, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.* And this he gathers, because *The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are*

Numb. 14. 34.

Deut. 28. 23,
24.

Verse 46.

1 Sam. 12. 17.

Joel 1. 13, 17.

laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the Corn is withered. As when the pillars and supports of an house are removed and taken away, we may learn infallibly, that the house it self will not long stand: So when Bread-corn, which is called in Scripture, the *stay and staff*, begins to fail, we need not doubt but some worse judgement is at the *doore*, and just entering in. Under this head of *extraordinary mutations*, I may rank *Eclipses, Comets, unusual Apparitions* and *Strange Accidents* in any of the Elements, which our Saviour sayes should and (as we read in *Josephus*,) did actually precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*. But of these I spoke before.

Signe 2.

Secondly, Another Sign of an approaching judgement, is, when the heart and affections of such as God sends to Preach in his Name, are mightily drawn out to speak against the abominations of a Land, but they meet with no successe answerable to their labours; but are either reproached and scorned; or Imprisoned and Silenced for it. Among the aggravations of *Zedekiahs* sinnes, this is reckoned as one, *That he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the Prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.* And likewise of *Herods*, who, though he were an incestuous and voluptuous wretch, yet saith the Text, *He added this above all, that he put John Baptist (a sharp and severe Preacher) in prison.* As if his other sins were small in comparison of this. It is therefore recorded as the cause which did both hasten and compleate the ruine of *Jerusalem*, That, *The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place. And therefore sent his*

2 Chron. 36.
12.

Luke 3. 20.

2 Chron. 36.
15, 16.

his Heralds, before he would wage open War: But, sayes the Text, *they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, and what followed, Unill the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and there was no remedy.* For when a people refuses to hear the voice of God, which speaks alwayes in these Prophets that he Commissions, then he hath no way to vindicate his honour, but to *make bare his arme,* in their destruction. As *David* avenged the outrage offered unto his Embassadors, in the utter slaughter and devastation of the *Ammonites.* When the *Jews* had arrived to that degree of complacency in sin, as to say unto the Prophets, *prophe-
sie not;* then God presently threatens, *I will presse* Amos 2.12,13. *your place, as a Cart presseth that is full of sheaves, i. e.* I will so load and pursue you with my judgements, that they shall dash and break you to pieces, as a loaded Cart doth crush the Waggoner or whatever else it falls upon. And therefore it is observable, that none ever imprisoned Gods Prophets, but they met with sudden and unexpected deaths. When *Ahab* had commanded to put *Micaiah* in Prison, the next news we hear of is, that he went down to Battle and 1 Reg. 22. perished there. And when *Amaziah* the High Priest of *Bethel* had accused *Amos* of *sedition and treason,* Amos 7.10,12 and forbad him to *prophe-
sie any longer at Bethel,* for *it was the Kings Chappel, and the Kings Court.* *Amos* denounceth against them this heavy doome, that his *Wife should be a strumpet, his children should fall by the sword,* and notwithstanding his endeavour to prevent his prophesying by *Prison and Pillory,* yet God would certainly fulfill it. It is so unpleasant a taske, so contrary to flesh and blood, and so full of apparent hazard,

hazard, to reprove sinne in the world, that where ever God stirs up the spirit of any to do it, with those Cautions and in that manner which the Word of God warrants, such an one will have Gods power to stand by and to defend him; and to suppress this duty in any, onely hastens the judgement: as when in a rage men put out the Candle, it presently involves them in an helpelesse and irrecoverable darknesse.

3. Lastly, It is an assured signe of an approaching judgement, when the iniquities of a Nation are arrived to their height. There is a certain fixed measure and fullnesse of sinne, which when it is once made up, the stroke of the Clock doth not more certainly follow the motion of the Hand, than Gods judgement doth pursue the cry of those sinnes. It is therefore rendred as a reason by God, why he did defer the punishment of the *Amorites* so long, because saith he, *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* And when God descends to visit *Sodom*, he alledgeth this as the occasion of it; *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and their sin is very grievous; wherefore, saith he, I will see whether they have done according to the cry of it:* implying that their sinne was grown so clamorous, loud and importunate, that it had attained its full growth, and therefore he could no longer defer his vengeance. This is exprest in Scripture under the similitudes of an *Harvest* and a *Vintage*; as in *Feremy*, God saith of *Babylon*, *The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floore, it is time to thresh her; yet a little while and the time of her harvest shall come: 7. I will mowe her down with my judgements, because she begins to be as it were mel-*
lowed

Gen. 15. 16.

Gen. 18. 20.

Jer. 51. 33.

lowed in sin, and thereby ripe for ruine. So in *Joel*,
Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come get Joel 3. 13.
you down, for the presse is full, the fats overflow, for
their wickednesse is great, or according to the Greek,
μωδουσαι is multip'ied. i. e. There is not one sinne
wanting to compleate the number, which when it is
made up, judgment alwayes follows it; as the break-
ing of the Ordnance doth its being overcharged with
Powder. It is for this reason mainly that our Sa-
viour so long delayes his coming, because then he in-
tends to put an end to, and to take vengeance of the
wickednesse of men, and therefore he waits till they
have filled up their measure, *Till the harvest of the* Revel. 15. 15.
earth be ripe, and sinne like a common contagion hath
once more overspread the face of all Lands, he will
not command his Angel to thrust in his sickle. And
therefore it will be dreadfull to live at the end of the
world; for as a stone that descends to its center, the
nearer it approaches, the more speed and swiftnesse,
and withall the more weight it contracts: or as the
people of Israel, *The nearer the time grew of Gods pro-* Acts 7. 17.
mise to them, the more they multiplied; as Stephen
observes. So the nearer the world hastens to its
end, the more will iniquity abound, and by its enor-
mous redundancy, provoke and accelerate an utter
desolation.

Quest. But some may ask, How shall we know
when the iniquities of a Nation are arrived unto that
measure and proportion, against which judgement is
decreed.

Ans. I answer, By comparing the event of the
Prophets predictions against *Jerusalem*, in these two
fatall *Epocha's*, when their City and Temple was
burnt

burnt up, first by the *Chaldeans*, and after that by the *Romans*; it will appear that a Nation which professeth to serve God, in the truth and purity of Religion, hath then filled up its *measure of sinne*, and consequently lies under the immediate arrest of some great and irreparable judgement, when there are committed by them these three great abominations.

First, When a people newly come out of great affliction, relapse into the very same sinnes for which they were afflicted. The end of all affliction on Gods part is to purge out sinne, and to get himself glory by our repentance, as he speaks by the Prophet, *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sinne*: When God misleth of this end, then one judgement sleighted and condemned, onely makes way for another. As he threatens by *Moses*, *If ye will not be reformed by me, by these things, but will walk contrary to me; Then* (he doth not say I will leave off striking, and give you over; but) *will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sinnes*. As a Judge doth seldom spare an incorrigible Felon, but after he hath been once burnt in the hand, if he comes again before him, he gives immediate order for his Execution: So when Gods lighter strokes have been beaten back without making impression, we must then expect to feel the weight of his hand. This is that which the Prophets by joynt consent take notice and sadly complain of in the people of *Israel*. *Esay* having recounted the sad estate of the *Jews*, by reason of the many enemies which did surround them; *Yet*, saith he, *for all this, his, i. Gods anger is not turned away,*
but

Isai. 27. 9.

Lev. 26. 23, 24.

Isai. 9. 12, 13.

but his hand is stretched out still : For which he assigns this reason, *For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.* So *Jeremy*, *They have refused to receive correction, they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.* Therefore I said, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God, *i. e.* They understand not what is Gods designe and end in bringing judgment, which was to bow and incline the heart unto himself. Whereupon it follows, *How shall I pardon thee for this?* As if he had said, this is a sinne which I cannot pardon, but must go on to punish. So *Amos* repeating several judgements, as *famine, drought, barrenness, the plague,* and the like, which God had brought upon them, yea, saith he, *I have overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand pluckt out of the burning ; yet ye have not returned unto me* saith the Lord : Then presently he threatens, *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, i. e.* I will execute what I formerly denounced, *to take away them and their posterity with fish hooks : i. e.* to make clean riddance. And because I will do this unto thee, therefore prepare to meet thy God, O *Israel.* *i. e.* Look upon God as thine enemy, and fit thy self for the encounter. For as it is in *Ezekiels* words, *Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filibiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, i. e.* I will so satiate mine anger, that I shall not need to renew it; as the Prophet *Nabum* speaks, *Affliction shall not rise up a second time.* I will once for all ease me of my adversaries, by breaking them to pieces, with one stroke

D of

Jer. 5. 2.

verse 7.

Amos 4. 11.

verse 2.

Ezek. 24. 13.

Nahum 1. 9.

Isai. 5. 12.

of my fury. When men run greedily to enjoy their unlawful pleasures, and are so much the fiercer and more eager upon them, the longer they have been restrained; there is a *Woe* pronounced against them: *The harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and Wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. i. e.* They never consider that when God sends a publick judgment, he is then like a Judge upon the Bench, and expects that his clemency in releasing and taking it off, should not be affronted with a new miscarriage.

Ezek. 13. 2, 3.

Secondly, The sins of a Nation then seem to have attained their full measure, when there is a general and an allowed corruption in the publick Preachers of the Word: when they either Preach vainly, or live viciously. Vain Preachers are such in the Prophet *Ezekiel's* words, *Who prophesie out of their own hearts; Foolish Prophets, who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing.* Who have never felt the power of the Word themselves, and therefore speak not to the heart, but only to the ears of others. Such in the Apo-

2 Cor. 2. ult.

stle *Paul's* phrase, as do *καταλείπειν λόγον*, we render it, *corrupt the Word*, but properly it is, to deal with the Word as bankrupt Merchants do with their Wine, *i. e.* dash and allay it by mingling water with it; So these, by trickments of humane eloquence and fantastick curiosity dresse up the Word of God, and by robbing it of its plainnesse, do as far as they can, take away likewise its power. Such as *Peter* speaks of, who

2 Pet. 2. 3.

παριστάνουσιν, by counterfeited and cunning words, make merchandize of men, *i. e.* make Preaching which God appointed as a means to save souls, meerly a trade to

get

get money by : whom he there severely threatens, *Whose judgment now of a long time, i. e. which long since was decreed against them, lingreth not, or is not idle. And their damnation, or punishment slumbereth not.* And it were well for Nations, if such Drones who eat the honey, and make a noise, and yet have no sting ; no piercing quicknesse in their Ministry to rouse and stir up a secure and sleepy sinner, were to perish alone in their iniquity ; but they are a general plague, a fretting leprosie that infect and consume all round about them. *For, saith Jeremy, a wonderfull and horrible thing is committed in the Land. The Prophets, i. the Preachers, prophesie falsely, and the Priests, i. the superiour Order of the Jewish Clergy, bear rule by their meanes, and my people love to have it so.* Which complaint he ushers in with this menace, *Shall I not visit for these things ? saith the Lord ; shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation as this ?* When those who are stiled *Lights*, do either not shine at all, or else cast a false and deceitfull lustre, which meerly mislead's the unwary Travellers ; God then thiinks it high time for him to come with his *Candle*, and to search out their iniquity, till he finds none. And if *vain-Predching* doth thus provoke God, much more doth *vicious living* : For if the *salt becomes unsavoury*, it is not only to be thrown away it self, but it defiles a *Land*, and makes it but a noisome dunghill, fit only for the *ruine of vengeance*, to purifie and wash it. *The Isa 56. 10, 12.*

Watchmen of Israel in *Esays* time, were ignorant and blind, and as a consequent of that, they were dumb Dogs which could not bark ; and likewise great voluptuaries, sleeping, lying down and loving to slumber. Such *Shepherds* which though they did not under-

D 2

stand,

Verse 9.

Ier. 23. 14.

Hosea 4. 9.

band, i. e. what belonged unto their proper duty, yet they could look to their profit well enough, *They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter*: And with their Gains, they procured *Wine and strong drink*, and eat and drank like Epicures. Whereupon God sends a summons, *All ye beasts of the field come to devour*. As if such brutish and swinish Teachers were only fit to be a prey unto their fellow beasts. So in *Jeremy* God complains, *I have seen in the Prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing. They strengthen the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickednesse. Therefore I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall, For from the Priests is profanenesse gone out into the Land*. For according to *Hoseas* words, which may be Proverbially used, *Like Priest, like People*. When sin gets credit by the Preachers example, it spreads presently. It is no wonder then if *God works*, i. e. sends some suddain judgment, for men will be sure to make void his Law, when such as should be the reprovers of sinne, are the principal and most noted committers of it.

3. Lastly, The sins of a Nation are then full and ripe for vengeance, when those commands of God are most commonly broken, which God hath most particularly pressed upon our observance; which he seems as it were to have an especiall care of; and therefore hath hedged in, and fenced about with his Prohibitions.

Prov. 14. 21.

Of this sort I might mention many, As 1. *Oppression of the poore*: which who so practiseth, *reproacheth his Maker*: and therefore ought to expect, that God will vindicate his quarrel. 2. *Adultery and uncleannes*, which

which is said *greatly to defile a Land* : And when a Land is *filthy*, God saith he will sweep it with the bee. *Ier. 3. 1.*
some of destruction. 3. *Entrapping and injurious Laws.*
 When the Law instead of being a protection, becomes a snare; when men are made offenders for a word, and wait is laid for such as reprove in the gate; and the just are turned aside for a thing of naught, *i. e.* for small and trivial causes, good and upright men are condemned and sentenced. But to pass by these, I shall insist only upon three Commands, all which are contained in the Decalogue, and God seems by his manner of enforcing them (which he doth in more words than he spends upon all the rest) to have a principal esteem and concernment for them.

1. *That against Idolatry, Com. 2.*
2. *That against Swearing, Com. 3.*
3. *That against Sabbath-breaking, Com. 4.*

1. The Command against Idolatry is fenced with a severe Commination, that God is a *jealous God*, and that he will punish not the persons only, but also the posterity of such *as hate him* : for so he counts all them to do, who set up their commands and worships, in competition with his; for did they indeed love God, they would reverence his Wisdom, and not presume to serve him any other way than he hath appointed. This Precept therefore is broken, not only when Images are erected, and divine honour given to them, which is but a gross and dull part of Idolatry, (and yet as stupid and senseless as it is, it is at this day, in these very terms, practised and enjoined among the Papists) but also when we have inventions and deviles of our own, to adorn as we think, but indeed to adulterate the worship of God :

D 3

which

Math. 15.

which is then best, when it is most simple, and savouring of its divine original. This was the sin of which the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty in our Saviours, who worshipped God after the commandments and traditions of men, for which he threatens, that they should be rooted up: *Every plant, saith he, which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.* God doth so much disdain to have his worship squared by mens modell, that he will root up all such impious pretenders, who by giving way to their own imaginations, do secretly tax the goodness of God, as if he were not holy and wise enough in his own appointments. For let men say and use what fine distinctions they please, it will at last be found, that all such self-devised forms, though they are not so gross and palpable, yet have every whit as much of the nature and spirit of Idolatry in them, as the open adoration of Images. And the reason is clear, for when God rebukes this sin by the Prophets, he chargeth them most with this, that they did what he never commanded. As in *Jeremy*, *They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire. Which, saith God, I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.* And in another place, *My people hath forgotten me, they have burnt incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their wayes, from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up, i. in a way, which God never chalked out for them.* So in *Hosea*, God complains, *That they made themselves Images of silver and gold, according to their own understanding.* Whereupon it is recorded as a great aggravation of *Jeroboams* sin, that he offered

Hosea 13. 2.

to God in the fifteenth day of the eighth moneth, *even in the moneth which he had devised of his own heart.* 1 King 15-32.
 From all which places it appears, that the Idol did not so much provoke God, as the ill temper of heart in the idolater, which occasioned it; and that was a proud conceit of mending the Law of God, and of adding something to make it more specious. And this corrupt principle is the true spring of all invented, uncommanded, and therefore unwarrantable *forms of Worship*. In defence of which, whoever pleads custome and antiquity, doth only use Names, for which we ought so much the more to detest it. Since the older an error is, the worse it is; and calls for the sorer rain of judgment, to wash those inveterate stains of it away. As God threatens by *Amos*, *For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment, because they have despised the Law of the Lord, and have not kept his Commandments; and their lies caused them to erre, after the which their fathers walked:* They it seems pleaded custome too, and tradition from Fathers, but this very thing did so little abate, that it is mentioned as a cause of their punishment. And it is very observable, that when the people of Israel were *flat Idolaters*, God did content himself with punishing them only by seventy years captivity. But in our Saviours time, when in great zeal, not for Gods Law, but for their own false glosses and Comments upon it, (by which they sought to uphold their superstitious usages,) they rejected Christ, and would not endure the simplicity of his Gospel (At which time they were so far from idolatry, that they would not brooke so much as the Emperours Statue to be set upon the Temple,) yet

yet God did look upon that refined and more subtle Idolatry, that *will-worship* of theirs, to be so great and so incurable a sin, that he soon after fulfilled all those *woes*, which our Saviour had denounced against them, and left them neither *place* nor *Nation*: and they are at this day a terrible Instance, both how ill managers of holy things, humane fancy is; and likewise how severely God will avenge such bold and unlicensed intermedling.

2. The second Command which God hath fenced with a commination, is that against *taking Gods name in vain*, concerning which, he affirms that he will not hold the doers of it *guiltlesse*, i. e. he will certainly and unavoidably punish them. By *taking Gods name in vain*, may be meant either *false*, or *vain swearing*; and either of them is a grievous God-provoking sin. For the first, *viz.* that of *perjury* or *forswearing*, the Instances are so notorious, that I need not insist on them. The cases of *Joshua* and the *Gibeonites*, which was an *Oath got by fraud*; of *Zedekiah* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, which was an *Oath extorted by force*, might seem to have something pleadable in their excuse: but Gods indispensable punishing the violatours of those *solemn Vowes*, sufficiently shewes us, that those persons who have been in the same case, must needs expect the same punishment, if they shall venture to commit the same sin. I shall therefore omit the prosecution of the guilt of *perjury*, against which so many *curses* are denounced in Scripture, that as certain as *God is true*, so certain is it, that that sin will never long scape unpunished. And only mention the inevitable danger of *vain-swearing*, which because it

Ezek. 17. 13,
19.

is more common, men are apt to think is more excusable. This swearing in ordinary discourse is that which our Saviour in his explication of the Law, sayes was originally intended should be forbidden, and therefore it is expressly prohibited by him, because it proceeds *en la mort* From that evil one who delights in all manner of superfluity of naughtiness, (as the Apostle James calls sinne) and therefore needless and unnecessary Oaths must needs take their first rise from his instigation. And when this sin did abound among the Pharisees in our Saviours time, who made as little scruple to make, as to break their Oath (for which we read they had found out many subtle distinctions; as that an Oath by the Altar did not bind, though an Oath, by the gold upon the Altar did, and the like) Our Saviour first tells them, that every Oath they swear, by any thing how light and trivial soever, was sacred and obligatory; since it had an immediate aspect upon the Creator; whose name, though it was not interposed, yet, was understood in all those solemn asseverations. And then denounces a Woe against them for such rash and inconsiderate swearing; since it betrays a great want of reverence towards God so lightly to mention his name, which ought to be feared and dreaded by us. And if they would plead, that they did not mention the name of God, but only swear by the creature, as by their head, &c. the crime is so much the worse, since it puts the creature into the place of God, who only hears our vows, and can take notice to punish the breach of them. So James, where he bids us not swear at all, gives this reason, *μη ορκίζετε οτι οτι, least ye fall under judgment, i. e.* Incurre some signall punishment

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and

James 3. 6.

and judgment from God, for God will not have his Name tossed about irreverently in our mouths; An Oath is a religious tye, and therefore ought to be *solemn* as well as *sacred*. When therefore a Nation abounds with *oaths* and *cursing*; when *swearing*, and *banning*, and *blaspheming* becomes our ordinary language; it is a sign that the *tongues of men are set on fire of hell*, and that calls for the fire of divine wrath to purifie them.

Gen. 2.

Lastly, The third command which is especially recommended to us, and therefore the breach of it cannot but be very dangerous, is that about *keeping the Sabbath*, which begins with a *Memento*, to shew, that it is very remarkable; and concludes with urging Gods example, who is to be our *pattern*, in all holy performances: And its this, which gives that command its obligation; for since the reason there alledged is universally equal, *viz.* That we ought to rest because God the Creator did rest upon the seventh day; it must needs follow from hence, that the command is universally binding. Whereupon we find that it was enjoined unto *Adam* in *Paradise*; when the nature of man was in its highest and most elevated degree of perfection: and therefore neither *presences of piety* with some, nor *commands from Authority* with others, nor *examples of antiquity* with the most; either can absolve any, or ought to prevaile with us to quit and to leave off this duty. Hence we find that in all *predictions*, the *breach of the Sabbath* is alwayes reckoned for one of the greatest, and most highly provoking sins. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, saith God, from doing thy pleasure upon my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord*

Mai. 58, 13, 14.

Lord, and honourable. It follows, *Then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, i. e.* I will signally bless and prosper thee : Now we must take notice, that whereever there is promise of a blessing for our obedience ; there is alwayes threatned a curse for disobedience. Therefore when *Jeremy* had commanded in the name of the Lord, that *they should carry no burden upon the Sabbath day, but hallow it, i. e.* by forbearing such kind of employments, according as God had commanded. He concludes, that if they would not hearken, then saith God, *I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Ferusalem, and it shall not be quenched.* From whence I infer, that if to bear a burden, which otherwise was lawfull and necessary, be so severely prohibited upon that day; How much more are sports and recreations, which are alwayes needles, and for the most part suspicious, to be avoided then. *Ezekiel* therefore having told the people of the Jews, that God had given them his Sabbath, to be a sign between him and them, that they might know, saith he, that *I am the Lord which do sanctifie them.* But they by their profanation having polluted these Sabbaths, Wherefore, saith God, *I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live, i. e.* I brought my judgments upon them to destroy and to overthrow them. And since the parity of reason doth oblige us to the same observance of a seventh day, or of one day in seven, with the Jews ; we cannot doubt, but our breach and violation of it, will bind us over to the same punishment.

Having thus found out in general what are the cer-

tain and infallible *signs* of an approaching judgment; the next part of our duty is, to enquire how far these *signs* do concern us, and whether we of this place have any just reason to be afraid of them. And here I shall advise you not so much to cast your eyes abroad, in beholding the state of others (though that likewise is to be done) as to turn your eyes inward, and to consider with you selves, whether any of these *tokens of death* be upon you. Survey your past actions, and discern, what measure your sins in particular have contributed to fill up the Nations Cup. For as when the Sea roars, and swells, the parts of water which lye next the bank, though they seem to be still and quiet, yet do, because of their contiguousness; as much contribute to the noise and tumult of the Ocean, as any of those which are more remote; so your sins and mine, though perhaps they make not that stir in the world, nor flye up and down so much upon the tongues of men; yet do indeed as much make up and complete the Nations finnes, as any of those that are more discoursed of. Therefore run over these provoking transgressions, mentioned a little before, and see what is your part in them. And when you have found them out, then

1. Confess your guilt, and give God the glory of his mercy in that he hath so long delayed to punish. When *Job* would testifie his integrity, and thereby use an argument, why God should ease him a little of his heavy load, he sayes, *I did not cover my transgressions, as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosome.* And *David* praying likewise for respit, useth this motive, *For I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.* As when God hath brought his judgments, confession of sin is the best way to redress and remedy them;

Iob 31. 33.

Psal. 38. 18.

them; as he tels the *Israelites*, that when he had driven them out into forreign Lands, yet saith he, *If then* Levit. 26. 40. *they shall confess their iniquity, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me: and if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, i. e.* If they acknowledge that they did deserve whatever I laid upon them: *then* saith God, *I will remember my Covenant,* and restore Ier. 3. 13. them unto their Land: So before a judgment comes, *confession* is the best way to arrest and stop it. As God himself prescribes the method, return, saith he to me, and I will not let my anger to fall upon thee, *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.* Till we *confess we have sinned,* Ier. 2. 35. the same Prophet. tels us, that *God will continue to plead with us.* *David* no sonner confessed, but he obtained pardon, which when it is once gained, no judgment either is, or ought to be terrible; Because then it looseth its name, and instead of a *punishment*, as from a Judge, is only the Rod of a tender and compassionate Father.

2. Prevent the growth of future judgments, by a particular and serious repentance. Confession and repentance must be joyned together, like the purge and the plaister; the one doth cleanse the wound, the other cures it. Confession is the sick and sinfull souls Vomit; Repentance is its Diet: the one doth stir the humours and discover the distemper, the other begets new blood and spirits, and brings us to a more healthfull habit.

To encourage you to this, consider

First, By this means you may be instrumentall in retarding Gods judgments as to the whole Nation.

Gen. 18.

Ier. 5. 1.

Ezek. 22. 30.

Had there been but *ten righteous men in Sodom*, God would not have medled with it : And when he came to punish *Jerusalem*, he descends to a lower proportion, and declares, that if there had been *but one*, but a *man that executed judgment, and that sought the truth, and he would pardon it*. And he often complains, that he sought for a man amongst them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before him, for the land, that he might not destroy it, but he found none. Thou sinner, whoever thou art, that now lyest surfeiting in thy wickedness, thou knowest not, but thou maist be the man, for whose sake, if thou repentest, God will save the Nation : Thou maist be raised out of the mire, wherein thou now wallowest, and become a pillar to uphold a tottering state. Or at least, if Gods decree be gone forth, and there be no reversing it, yet

Ier. 18. 7, 8.

Secondly, Thou wilt be sure to save thy self, though the sentence of destruction should be gone out of Gods mouth, and we were a people utterly devoted to ruine ; nay though God was just now aiming his thunder, and levelling his arrows ; yet could you suppose in that very instant, that a sinner would repent, the threatned and intended evil would not come near him. Thus God himself expressly, *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evill, I will repent of the evill that I thought to do unto them*. And the reason is clear, because repentance changes the person ; God is angry only with sinners, but he that hath once repented, is no longer accounted a sinner : Repentance evens all accounts, and

and sin once truly sorrowed for, is not only forgiven, but remembered no more. When we have once attained to such peace with God, the tumults and stirs in the world may alarm, but they ought not to fright us. Therefore to conclude in the Prophet

*Zephaniahs words, Before the decree bring forth,
before the day pass as the chaff, before the
fierce anger of the Lord come upon you,
seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the
earth, which have wrought his judgment;
seek righteousness, seek
meekness, it may be ye shall
be hid in the day of
the Lords Anger.*

Zeph. 2. 12.

FINIS.

ERRATA. Page 1. line 2. for *command* read *demand*, page 2.
line 28. for *observe* read *afford*.

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